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FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9460  
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHZJ/HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH IMMEDIATE 9825  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9461

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2018  
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [KIRF](#) [KISL](#) [KTIP](#) [PHUM](#) [SA](#) [SMIG](#) [SOCI](#) [XF](#)  
SUBJECT: NO INDICATION SAG HAS CHANGED POLICY ON TAIF  
CHRISTIANS

REF: A) JEDDAH 00448

Classified By: Classified by CDA David Rundell  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) In an October 27 meeting with Saudi Assistant Minister for National Security Affairs Prince Mohammed bin Naif (MBN), Charge Rundell raised the issue of the Taif Christians (ref A). MBN reiterated previous assurances that the deportation orders in question had been rescinded. Nevertheless, he promised he would investigate if the Embassy could provide a list of names and passport numbers of the individuals in question. These were supplied the next morning.

¶2. (S) COMMENT: Embassy has no evidence that that SAG policy on this issue has changed. Those imprisoned earlier were released, and to our knowledge, none have been deported. As ref A points out, it is very difficult to verify the claims made by our source, "Abraham." In any case, even assuming that what the source says is true, he alleges that it is the Mecca Governorate, and not the MOI, that has refused to lift the deportation orders. This could be an attempt by some elements within the Governorate to embarrass the SAG on the eve of King Abdallah's visit to New York to promote his Interfaith Dialogue Initiative (IDI), which is extremely unpopular in conservative religious circles. However, given that none of what Abraham says can be corroborated, at this point it would be premature to come to any conclusions. END COMMENT

RUNDELL